DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 177 598 CS 205 239

AUTHOR Miller, Bonnie L.
TITLE Behind Those Words: The Language Cue Systems.
PUB DATE [77]
NOTE 10p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Context Clues; *Cues; *Language Processing; *Miscue Analysis; Psycholinguistics; *Reading Comprehension; *Reading Processes; Reading Research; Reading Skills; Structural Analysis

ABSTRACT

A review of the literature on miscue analysis supports the assumption that reading is a language process. All three language cue systems--graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic--must interact if reading for meaning is to occur, and a whole language environment is necessary for a student to develop reading proficiency. (AEA)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED177598

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Behind Those Words: The Language Cue Systems

The Right to Read movement of the 1970's prompted varied research and technological developments in the field of reading. One area of promise which has emerged from the research is that resulting from miscue analysis. Miscue analysis allows a psycholinguistic assessment of what the reader does during oral reading and provides a tool for the analysis of differences between oral and expected responses; it enables an evaluation of the reader's use of graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic cues (K. Goodman 1976a). According to Goodman and Goodman (1977, p. 319), miscue analysis provides the researcher with "a window on the reading process."

The literature resulting from miscue research has important implications for the teaching of reading since it supports the assumption that reading is a language process (Goodman and Goodman 1977). From the psycholinguistic point of view, the reading process consists of the reader, a user of language, using his/her natural language ability and thought as s/he encounters the printed page.

K. Goodman (1976b), who describes the reading process as a psycholinguistic guessing game, views the reader

Dr. Bonnie L. Miller
Staff Development Coordinator
Prince William County School Division
Manassas, Virginia

Please forward any reply to:
Dr. Bonnie Miller
4486 Lawnvale Drive
Gainesville, VA 22065

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Bonnie L. Miller
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CS205239

as a user of language who processes graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic information as s/he attempts to get meaning from print. As the reader processes this information, s/he is attempting to get at meaning by using the whole language to do so. He further states:

> The learner of reading has a highly developed language competence which is his greatest resource in learning to read. In fact, the key to successful reading instruction is . . . in the learner. With new respect for the learner we can make learning to read and write an extension of the natural language learning the child has already accomplished without professional assistance. (p. 1)

According to Smith and K. Goodman (1974), insights generated from research in linguistics and psychology should cause educators to review their beliefs about reading and how children learn to read. Research indicates that the child learning to read does not learn by putting letters together to form words or by stringing words together to form sentences to get to meaning. They believe that "the deep-level process of identifying meaning either precedes or makes unnecessary the process of identifying individual words" (p. 241).

Based on the assumption that children learn easiest when they move from concrete evidence to the abstract, Y. Goodman (1976) further supports the use of whole language in teaching the child to read when she says, "The concrete of language is wholeness" (p. 126). She

explains that presenting the sound system in isolation from language, which is the case in many beginning reading programs, causes the child to work with the most abstract part of language. After working with abstract bits and pieces of language, the child is then required to fit them into language as a whole. She states that:

> . . . research supports the basic assumption that when reading takes place, even at the earliest moment, all three systems of language must be intact in order for the reader to understand that reading is language and that the purpose of reading is to get at the author's message. (p. 126)

Although the interaction of all three language cue systems is necessary if reading for meaning is to occur, each of them must be considered separately in order to better understand their interrelatedness in the reading process.

Graphophonic

Menosky (1976) describes the graphophonic cue system as "the complex set of relationships between the graphic representations . . . and the phonological representations of the language" (p. 75). While the reader samples and predicts in the act of reading, s/he uses both graphemes and their related phonemes as cues which interact with the syntactic and semantic cues. These graphophonic cues help the reader determine whether or not s/he is making good predictions as s/he samples the

surface structure. They aid him/her in correcting miscues which do not sound right or do not make sense. Menosky says further that the "graphophonic cues are of less importance than the other cues" (1976, p. 79). Menosky stresses, however, that

> . . . graphophonic cues are useful for readers who integrate and interrelate the cue systems, and who, in their simultaneous processing of these cues, are able to make decisions about importance, and therefore use the cues that are necessary when they are necessary. (p. 79)

Syntactic

The syntactic component of language according to Cairns and Cairns (1976) is composed of the rules which describe the grammatical structure of sentences along with the relationship between parts of a sentence. A child comes to the task of learning to read with the ability to use these rules in a proficient manner. Burke (1976) points out that the syntactic system is unique since it is through this system that all three language systems interact. She says

> . . . If what we produce is syntactically acceptable, it can be verified in relation to semantic acceptability and graphophonic information. When what is produced is syntactically and semantically acceptable, it can be verified on the basis of graphic similarity. The successful application of one system is measured by the functioning of the other two systems. (p. 80).

The syntactic cue system aids the effective reader in

correcting miscues since the knowledge of the rules of his/her language will help him/her recognize unacceptable structures when s/he miscues while reading. When s/he realizes that his/her miscues have created an unacceptable syntactic structure, s/he attempts to create another structure that makes sense to him/her. In this attempt to correct, s/he uses syntactic, semantic, and graphophonic cues. Burke (1976) emphasizes the importance of the syntactic cue system when she says

> The syntactic system can be pictured as that point at which thought processes and language processes merge in deep structure. If the reader recognizes language as a specific instance of meaning-gaining and recognizes reading as an expression of language, then the finite nature of the syntactic system and the intuitive control of it developed in oral language usage are immediately available to the reader. Perhaps the single most important question which readers can ask, basic to the rest of their attack upon written language, is: Does it sound like language? (p. 88)

Semantic

The semantic cue system allows the reader to obtain meaning from what she reads. This system is composed of the reader's experiences and conceptual background. The reader obtains meaning as s/he identifies with the author's intended meaning (K. Goodman 1973). According to Watson (1973) "the closer the match between the thought and language of the author and the

reader, the greater the degree of communication" (p. 103). When the child is an efficient reader s/he uses the semantic cue system along with the syntactic and grapho-phonic cue systems. Page (1976) emphasizes that the "semantic cue system is not independent of the other systems" (p. 92). The systems must function interdependently if reading for meaning is to take place.

Teachers should view the developing reader as a user of language and provide him/her with opportunities to learn to read in much the same way as s/he learned language through hypothesis-testing. Smith (1975) contends that the reader can only develop the basic skills necessary for effective reading by reading. It is only through reading that the reader

> . . . can test his hypotheses about the nature of the reading process, establish distinctive feature sets for words and meanings with a minimum of visual information and discover how not to overload the brain's information-processing capacity and avoid the bottlenecks of memory. (p. 185)

In summary of the views presented dealing with the psycholinguistic nature of the reading process, K. Goodman (1976a)says

> Whether one wishes to understand reading as a process to teach initial literacy or to help readers become more effective, one must start from a base of psycholinguistics, the study of the interrelationships of thought and language. All the central questions involved in reading are psycholinguistic questions, because reading is a process in which language interacts with thought. Psycholinguistics is foundational to all understanding of the reading process. (p. 18)

The literature cited supports the theory that a whole language environment is necessary for the child to develop reading proficiency. Using written language in its total context allows the child to use his natural language competence. The extent to which the reader's language and thought interact with that of the author has a direct affect on the number of ideas communicated and consequently on the degree of reading proficiency attained. This interaction can be facilitated and accelerated by a teaching method which involves the child in the whole language thereby allowing the interdependent use of the semantic, syntactic, and graphophonic cue systems, the employment of natural language competence, and the application of individual experience and knowledge.

Based on these theories of the psycholinguistic nature of the reading process, it appears that an approach to the teaching of reading which uses a whole language environment rather than isolated units of language would be more effective, i.e., the ideal situation would be one where reading is learned by reading.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Burke, Carolyn L. "The Three Cue Systems: #2--Syntactic." Findings of Research in Miscue Analysis: Classroom Implications, eds. P. David Allen and Dorothy J. Watson. Urbana, Ill.: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, National Council of Teachers of English, 1976, 79-88.

Cairns, Helen S., and Charles E. Cairns. Psycholinguistics --A Cognitive View of Language. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976.

Goodman, Kenneth S. "Miscues: Windows on the Reading Process." Miscue Analysis, ed. Kenneth S. Goodman. Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1973 3-14.

_____. "Miscue Analysis: Theory and Reality in Reading." New Horizons in Reading, ed. John E. Merritt. Newark, Dela.: International Reading Association, 1976, 15-26. (a)

_____. Reading: a Conversation with Kenneth Goodman. (An interview by Ghia Brenner, Scott, Foresman and Company.) Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1976. (b)

_____ and Yetta M. Goodman. "Learning about Psycholinguistic Processes by Analyzing Oral Reading," Harvard Educational Review, XLVII (August, 1977), 317-333.

Goodman, Yetta M. "Developing Reading Proficiency." Findings of Research in Miscue Analysis: Classroom Implications, eds. P. David Allen and Dorothy J. Watson. Urbana, Ill.: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, National Council of Teachers of English, 1976, 113-128.

Menosky, Dorothy M. "The Three Cue Systems: #1--Grapho-phonic." Findings of Research in Miscue Analysis: Classroom Implications, eds. P. David Allen and Dorothy J. Watson. Urbana, Ill.: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, National Council of Teachers of English, 1976, 75-79.

Page, William D. "The Three Cue Systems: #3--Semantic." Findings of Research in Miscue Analysis: Classroom Implications, eds. P. David Allen and Dorothy J. Watson. Urbana, Ill.: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, National Council of Teachers of English, 1976, 88-93.

Smith, Frank. Comprehension and Learning. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1975.

_____ and Kenneth S. Goodman. "On the Psycholinguistic Method of Teaching Reading," Language and the Language Arts, eds. Johanna S. DeStefano and Sharon E. Fox. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1974, 239-43.

Watson, Dorothy J. "Helping the Reader: from Miscue Analysis to Strategy Lessons." Miscue Analysis, ed. Kenneth S. Goodman. Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1973, 103-115.